



RESOLUTION #04042024

Support for Tangible Efforts to Reduce Staff Workloads

Purpose: The mission of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) is to transform lives through education. Staff at UAA play a pivotal role in the successful execution of that mission.

Economic hardships in the last several years have disproportionately impacted staff at UAA. With a reduced staff workforce and no corresponding reduction in workloads, many staff are in the midst of burnout. Staff Council asks UAA leadership to commit to making significant changes in the upcoming fiscal year to reduce staff burnout and improve morale.

Whereas: Staff workloads have increased over the past several years due to decreasing full-time, regular workforce and/or implementation of additional programs.

Whereas: Previous budget cuts reduced (or left unfilled) staff positions, but not services or workloads, shifting the work onto remaining staff.

Whereas: Shifts in operations as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic created additional services and workloads in support of remote learning and work, with many continuing to this day.

Whereas: Staff workloads, in many cases, are unmanageable, leading to increased turnaround times, impacts on quality of work and performance, decreased productivity improvements, and an inability to achieve operational excellence or innovation.

Whereas: Unmanageable workloads increase stress and the risk of serious burnout leading to loss of productivity, increased work absences, increased risk of physical and mental health impacts for employees ([Salvagioni et al., 2017](#); [Hills, 2021](#)), negative impacts to work life balance ([Ugwu et al., 2022](#)), decreased employee engagement ([George et al., 2024](#)), lowered job satisfaction, and increased organizational costs ([Kittisak et al., 2021](#); [Siu et al., 2020](#)).

Whereas: Current University of Alaska (UA) HR processes and policies do not adequately alleviate or address the continued burden on the employee.

Whereas: Current budget posture does not allow for funding of the many additional positions needed across the university to ease the burden.

Whereas: Current budget guidance encourages supervisors to leave vacated positions unfilled to create departmental cost savings while aggravating workload challenges. Additionally, due to budget constraints, supervisors are unlikely to invest in needed resources to support their staff in their work.

Whereas: When positions remain vacant and the workload is redistributed, staff may be required to complete tasks for which they are untrained, which adds time and frustration.

Whereas: Lack of capacity does not allow for proper training of new staff, negatively impacting the new employee's experience.

Whereas: At the January 2024 Caucus, faculty voiced concerns over additional administrative burden, in part due to limited staff capacity.

Whereas: From 2016 to 2018 UAA had a LEAN Center of Excellence which specialized in supporting university teams in developing process improvement and training UAA employees to be certified in LEAN. This program provided dedicated expertise in operational excellence and process improvement across the university.

Whereas: The UAA Staff Council has not seen any clear steps taken by leadership or management to address staff workload concerns, or burnout. We recognize efforts have been made to address staff morale with the reintroduction of Staff Appreciation Day and Employee Development Day. True morale improvement cannot be achieved without addressing staff workloads.

Therefore, be it resolved: The UAA Staff Council asks the Chancellor and Cabinet to **enact the development of a plan to identify, recommend, and implement process improvements** across UAA with the goal of addressing workloads through a collaborative and transparent process.

Be it further resolved: The UAA Staff Council recommends the development of the plan take the form of hiring a consulting firm, creating a new position or department for operational excellence, or reinstating the LEAN Center of Excellence.

Be it further resolved: To ensure the quality of results that the process **involves, collaborates, and communicates** with key UAA stakeholders including governance groups, process owners, and process users, from the kick-off meeting to the final report.

Be it further resolved: UAA leadership is asked to create and publicize incentives that support process improvements, innovative ideas, and workload and resource reduction while prioritizing the health and mental well-being of staff. Leadership should work with the team identified to lead the plan and governance leadership to create meaningful and innovative incentives.

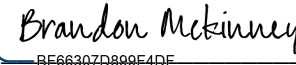
Be it further resolved: The UAA Staff Council asks that action is initiated within six (6) months and for tangible results to begin to be reported within one (1) year.

Be it further resolved: That the report and recommendations are made available to the UAA community and transparent action is taken by leadership based upon the findings.

Be it further resolved: The UAA Staff Council requests a written response to this resolution from the Chancellor or their designee in writing within 45 days.

Respectfully Submitted,

 May 16, 2024
Dawn Humenik
Staff Council Co-President

DocuSigned by:
 April 4, 2024
Brandon Mckinney
Staff Council Co-President

Adopted by a vote of 12-2 yes majority by the UAA Staff Council on the 4th day of April 2024.